

Creeper will produce dozens of 4" orange tubular flowers from May through August—just the time when our Ruby-throated Hummingbirds can make best use of them.

**B**elow is a list of all our "Top Ten Native Hummingbird Plants." You can find photos and care instruction for all of them on the *Operation RubyThroat* Web site ([www.rubythroat.org](http://www.rubythroat.org)).

1. **Trumpet Creeper**, *Campsis radicans* (woody vine with large orange flowers; late spring through late summer)
2. **Beebalm** or **Oswego Tea**, *Monarda didyma* (red-flowering mint; summer)
3. **Trumpet Honeysuckle**, *Lonicera sempervirens* (semi-woody vine with thin scarlet flowers; spring & summer)
4. **Cardinal Flower**, *Lobelia cardinalis* (multiple red flowers on upright stalk; late summer)
5. **Spotted Jewelweed**, *Impatiens capensis* (dangling orange flower; late summer)
6. **Red Columbine**, *Aquilegia canadense* (dangling red flower; early spring)
7. **Canada Lily**, *Lilium canadense* (tall plant with large bell-shaped orange flowers; summer)
8. **Indian Pink**, *Spigela marilandica* (uncommon wildflower with pink blossoms; late spring)
9. **Red Buckeye**, *Aesculus pavia* (small tree with red flowers; spring)
10. **Catawba Rhododendron**, *Rhododendron catawbiense* (woody shrub with clusters of pinkish-red flowers; early summer)

**C**ultivate these plants in your backyard or school campus and you'll likely be visited by hummingbird visitors. But don't forget, flowers and artificial feeders supply only sugar—a carbohydrate. A hummingbird also needs fats and proteins it gets from eating tiny spiders or insects such as gnats and aphids. Female hummingbirds feed these arthropods to nestlings, and in autumn all hummingbirds feed heavily on insects and store them as fat for the long migration to Mexico and Central America. So, we advise you NOT to use insecticides in your Hummingbird Habitat or you'll be eliminating the very food hummingbirds need to survive.

**H**ummingbird feeders are fun because they bring birds close for easier observation, but to really attract these tiny feathered dynamos try the plants described in this brochure. Create a Backyard or Schoolyard Hummingbird Habitat that meets the needs of these Neotropical migrant birds and your rewards will be many. Be sure to send us an E-mail telling us all about your Hummingbird Habitat!

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Operation RubyThroat:  
The Hummingbird Project  
([www.rubythroat.org](http://www.rubythroat.org))

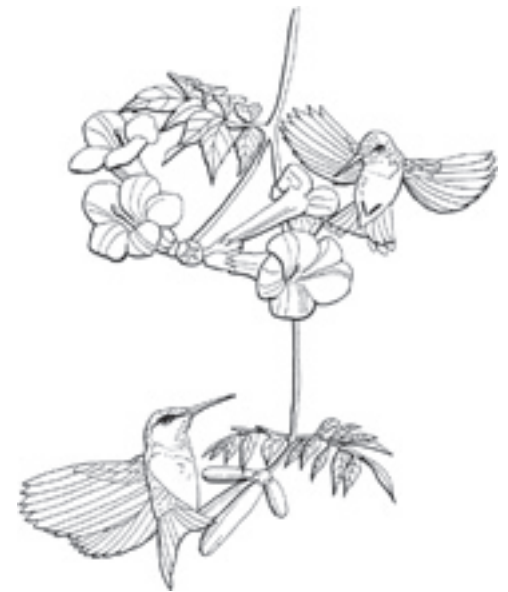
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Piedmont Natural History  
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# PLANTING FOR HUMMINGBIRDS

Providing Backyard  
and Schoolyard Habitats  
for Ruby-throated  
Hummingbirds



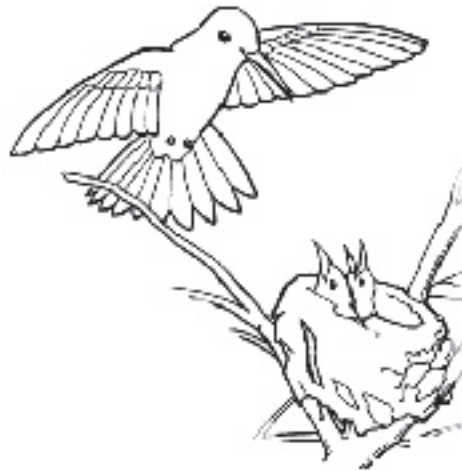
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**T**he Ruby-throated Hummingbird, *Archilochus colubris*, is the ONLY hummingbird that breeds in the eastern United States and Canada. It can be found in spring, summer, and early fall throughout South Carolina and North Carolina, where it nests in the Coastal Plain, Sandhills, Piedmont, and Mountain Provinces. It is a bird of relatively open areas and is seldom encountered in deep woods. Although hummingbirds often come to artificial feeders filled with a 4:1 mix of water:sugar, these tiny birds do best in the Carolinas when we also provide appropriate habitat—including nectar-producing flowers, shrubs in which to find shelter, trees for nesting, and a water element such as a mister or shallow bird bath. If your home or school is a “Wildlife Habitat” certified through the National Wildlife Federation, it probably already contains these components and is good potential habitat for hummingbirds.

**B**ecause weather in the Southeast is relatively mild, nearly all NATIVE hummingbird flowers found anywhere within the ruby-throat’s breeding range will grow quite well in the Carolinas if proper soil, sun, and watering conditions are met; these native plants are usually winter hardy and will thrive year after year with minimal care. Although many NONnative ornamental plants are also attractive to hummingbirds, we encourage homeowners, gardeners, and schools to use native plants whenever possible. Development and habitat destruction have already eliminated vast stands of native plants, and we need to do

more to re-establish them. Do NOT dig native plants from the wild and transplant them unless the site in which you find them is in danger of being destroyed. Instead, get them from a neighbor whose garden has an established population, or purchase them from a reputable native plant nursery that is nearby and raises its stock from seed or cuttings.



**M**any hummingbird flowers are a shade of red or orange—colors easy to see against nature’s green backdrop—and most are tubular—a shape the hummingbird’s bill fits perfectly as it probes deep into the blossom for nectar. Hummingbirds are very curious, however, so they will find nectar even in flowers of other colors or shapes. While lapping up nectar with its long extensible tongue, the hummingbird picks up pollen on its throat or forehead and transfers it to the next flower, serving as an important pollinator—especially for blooms insects cannot reach.

**O**peration RubyThroat: The Hummingbird Project (see [www.rubythroat.org](http://www.rubythroat.org)) is an international education, research, and conservation initiative offered by Hilton Pond Center for Piedmont Natural History in York, South Carolina. The project involves students, teachers, and citizen scientists in 38 U.S. states, Canada, Mexico, and all seven Central American countries. Through *Operation RubyThroat* we developed a list of “Top Ten Native Hummingbird Plants” you may wish to try in your Hummingbird Habitat. Some are easy to establish at almost any site, while others only do well in moist locations or non-sandy soils. If you pay attention to a plant’s individual needs you can probably amend your soil and get it to grow. Ask a local plant nursery or master gardener for hints about what plants do best at your locale, or refer to a gardening site on the Web.

**O**ur Number One favorite native hummingbird flower is Trumpet Creeper, *Campsis radicans*; we call it the “hummingbird magnet” because of its prolific nectar production. This ram-bunctious vine grows almost everywhere in the Carolinas—and beyond—and is a good starter plant for anyone trying to create a Hummingbird Habitat. It can be grown from cuttings or seed and transplants well. We suggest you establish it on a trellis or fence so it can be cut back in fall if its growth becomes too luxurious; if planted at the base of a large tree it eventually will climb toward the sunlight and bloom ‘way up in the leaf canopy. Even a small patch of Trumpet